

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, later on this evening, the gentleman from New Jersey, DON PAYNE, and other Members of Congress will continue to pay tribute to my fallen buddy, Ron Brown, but I just want to share some views as I saw Ron and 33 other coffins arrive in Dover, these flag-draped coffins covering the bodies of people that were in the business of selling the United States of America, and then heard the tributes that were paid to all of them, as well as attending at Arlington cemetery.

As the bands were playing and the flags were unfurled and the cannons were blasting, I could only think what a great country we live in and how many things we just take for granted; that here a young American who comes from one of the poorest communities can, in such a short period of time, capture the love and gain the respect of not only the President of the United States but so many Americans from seashore to seashore, and, at the same time, to know that in so many foreign countries, some not as friendly as we wish that they would be, that they lowered their flags at half mast for this great American, Ron Brown.

I think that when we start thinking about loving America, we have to think about what kind of person could love his country so much that he would try to climb mountains that other people would not even attempt, not only to show how great America was and what products we wanted to sell, and not how superior we were, but to actually talk with trade ministers and prime ministers and presidents in terms of the needs of their country. The poverty, the disease, the sickness, the hunger, the unemployment, the joblessness, and to be able to say to that country that America was there as a friend that wanted to help.

This was a part of the world that we never spent that much time in. This was the part of the world that we had to develop markets in. This was the part of the world that we had to increase their ability to have disposable income so that as we had once done in Europe under the Marshall plan, that we could regain the leadership that we have possessed since World War II. And how they loved him, because it was not just selling America, it was the interest he had in them.

I saw at the funeral Ambassadors that had flown in from Mexico, India, South Africa. They spoke, they talked, they loved, they cared. And I said what a wonderful country it is that we have in the United States of America, people that come from every country in the world.

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Unlike other countries where you just look at the country and you can feel just the narrow culture interest that they have, there is no country in the world that we cannot reach and show that Americans come from all over. To see what investing in the edu-

cation of a Ron Brown, or Ron Gonzalez, or Ron Lee, or the women that have been denied the opportunity to show, to be given the opportunity to show that they are Americans, this is a great country, and go abroad and find out that they are making friends for us, as well as creating trade.

Mr. Speaker, I have received notices, as well as telephone calls, from Senator DOLE and from Haley Barbor, who is the chair of the Republican Party, to say to me, as they have said to others, this issue is too big to look at party labels. It is too big to look at the color of American skins. It is American to be able to say that we can make our country a greater place, create more jobs if only we cared enough to train our people for these type of opportunities and to share our talents with so many other countries in the world.

RIGHTFUL ROLE OF GOVERNMENT TO DEFEND THE DEFENSELESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York [Mr. FORBES] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. FORBES. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the sentiments of my colleague from New York.

Mr. Speaker, I take the well today to talk a little bit about an issue I think that is of great and paramount importance to both sides of the aisle that serve in this august body. For the last 15 months, we have watched as the House of Representatives struggles with public policy questions. What is the rightful role of government? To what extent do we fund these programs? What programs work? What programs do not work?

For 15 months, it has been a very healthy, although at times contentious, debate. It gets at the very heart of what democracy is all about. Taking these issues to the American people, to the floor of the House of Representatives and having a good give and take. We are trying to understand, as we are on the threshold of a new millennium, where to take America. What are our priorities? And I would say, Mr. Speaker, that as we think about those priorities, we think about a government that most of us would like to be benevolent, caring, there for those who cannot help themselves.

We need to think of the question that gets at the heart of the highest, most precious part of the human experience, and I speak with reference to those moments when a young woman and her husband, a young man and wife, learn the terrific news that there is going to be a birth of a child. Their excitement, their love, their exhilaration is unmatched by almost anything else that one could experience in life, and I do not think there is an American, whether they be described as pro-choice or pro-life, that cannot appreciate that very important and most precious moment in the human experience.

It leaves me, Mr. Speaker, mystified, wondering if the rightful role of government is not to step forward, to indeed protect the most defenseless among us, that nurturing, growing life within the womb, that most precious experience in a woman's existence. What is the rightful role of government, I ask, if not to protect that defenseless life? Yet we had an issue, and I speak principally to the issue of the late-term partial birth abortion ban, and the question of government's rightful role to step in at a period when this baby, growing within the womb, is 4½ months along, or on the eve of a birth. Yet this procedure continues and will continue because a bill that was sent to the White House was rejected. Despite the safeguard stipulating that there must be an absolute threat to the life of the mother, the President chose to veto this bill. The same president who as Governor could have been at one point described as pro-life now sides with the radical left on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, I ask again, what is the rightful role of government if not to step forward at these most important moments to defend the defenseless, to step forward for our children? Is there anything so precious in life, in society as the birth of a child, as the potential growth of a new human life? And yet, this partial birth abortion procedure, which some say is a rare occasion, well, I would say one occasion is too many. There are, as I have been told, some very infrequent times when the life of the mother is so threatened that this procedure is performed. But I am also told that the American Medical Association, its college of legislative people and the 12 doctors therein, have said that this is an unnecessary procedure.

Mr. Speaker, as I yield the podium, I would just ask that if the rightful role of government is not to defend the defenseless, to defend precious life, then what is the role of government?

THE TRADE DEFICIT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio [Ms. KAPTUR] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, over the weekend, here in Washington there was a public relations blitz organized by the administration to tell us and the world how United States trade relations with Japan have improved. National Economic Council Chair Laura Tyson went so far as to state we have had a great record of success with the Japanese in the area of trade with our exports increasing by one-third since 1993, and we have seen the trade deficit come down, she said, for the first time in 5 years, so we have a strong record of success.

Well, you know, people can twist numbers in amazing ways. If the administration had such a strong record of success, why has the United States trade deficit with Japan worsened during the Clinton watch and become even